

Fellowship of First Fleeters Hunter Valley Chapter

"To live on in the hearts and minds of Descendants is never to die."

All correspondence to: 76 Fletcher St. Adamstown 2289

www.firstfleetershunter.com.au

President:
Barbara Turner
Ph. 49439105

Vice President/Membership:
Cynthia Huggup
Ph. 49558045

Secretary:
Yvonne Bradley
Ph. 49574758

Treasurer:
Helen Pacey
Ph: 40234979



The Coal River Bulletin

Newsletter No: 23 January 2012



Our 2011 Christmas Luncheon has come and gone – unfortunately it turned out to be one of the wettest and most miserable days imaginable – BUT in the true spirit of Christmas all who hoped to attend made it through the wind and the rain and an enjoyable time was had by one and all! It was a pleasure to have as our special guests, local researcher and historian Suzanne Martin and John Shortland who travelled up by train from Sydney.

Congratulations to those lucky enough to win the raffles and Lucky Dip prizes – hope you enjoy your goodies! A First Fleet trivia of 20 multiple choice questions proved to be an interesting challenge but the winning team scored 18 correct answers. Well done to the Aubins who teamed up with our guest Suzanne Martin (they must either read *The Founders* thoroughly or made some lucky guesses).

Below are a few snapshots from the day – in the group photo note the photographer managed to get into the photo too – reflected in the mirror at the back!



**In 2012 we are looking forward to another interesting and active year
with our Members and friends.**

Our first activity will be on the Newcastle Foreshore celebrating

AUSTRALIA DAY
Thursday 26th January



It will be an early start for our committee to set up our Stall and its surrounds so we will be ready to share our heritage with any interested folk passing by. A few keen/brave members are really getting into the spirit and “dressing up” this year.

The aim is to make this a day of fellowship for our whole group and we invite one and all to join us at some point during the day, especially if you are available around lunch time. There will be a BARBEQUE fired up ready – all you need to bring is your favourite BBQ lunch and a chair if possible.

Our designated area offers shade if it's bright and sunny and cover if it's a day of liquid sunshine. You can find us on the path between the western end of the Duck Pond and the Harbour and accessible from the esplanade as well, as there is no stall behind us.

Hope to see you there!

Congratulations and birthday wishes to:

Wilga Ramsay 16th January
Yvonne Bradley 21st January
Terry Knowles 14th February

Wendy Swinkles 18th January
Delma Burns 6th February
Carole Powell 23rd February

50th Wedding Anniversary

**Dom and Wendy Swinkles are celebrating their
50th Wedding Anniversary!**

**Congratulations and very best wishes from us all at the Hunter Chapter
of the Fellowship of First Fleeters on this happy occasion.**



2012

The United Nations General Assembly has declared **2012** to be the:

- a) *International Year of Co-Operatives*, recognising their contribution to the World Economy (thank goodness something is contributing).
- b) *The Allan Turing* year, as 2012 is the centennial of the birth of this brilliant mathematician, computer pioneer and one of the team of WWII code breakers.

Phil and I spent an absorbing afternoon during our recent UK holiday visiting Bletchley Park where Allan Turing and the team of WWII code-breakers cracked Germany's Enigma machine's secret codes.



Bletchley Park - Buckinghamshire UK

The team developed the encrypting machine known as the *Bombe*, said to be Britain's best kept war secret. Their successes are believed to have shortened the war by two years and saved countless lives.



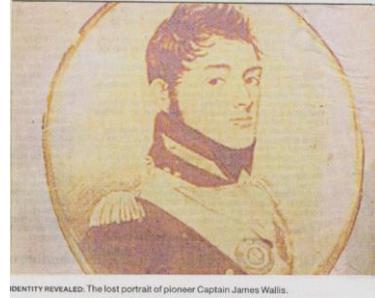
Sculpture of Allan Turing made entirely of slate

The museum at Bletchley Park also houses the first computer known as 'Colossus' (below).

Colossus is *just a little larger* than the Lap-top I'm using at the moment AND I'm told it's not nearly as powerful as a modern day pocket calculator!



In the last Newsletter I included an article on the amazing find of an album at the back of a cupboard in Ontario Canada. You will recall it was compiled by Captain James Wallis, the 7th Commandant of the convict settlement in Newcastle (1816-1818). He was in the news again recently when a face was finally put to his name.



IDENTITY REVEALED: The lost portrait of pioneer Captain James Wallis.

Elizabeth Ellis, Emeritus Curator at Sydney's Mitchell Library, luckily stumbled on this portrait of Captain James Wallis on an internet family history site. She believes it dates to before he came to Australia – possibly as early as 1812.

Thank You

You will all be sorry to hear our Social Director, Noelene Snowden, has requested 6 months leave of absence on health grounds and unfortunately has had to resign her position. Noelene has done a fantastic job organizing our outings and guest speakers.

Thank you for all your time and effort Noelene, providing us with so many interesting activities – we send our very best wishes for a speedy return to our meetings!



To others of our Chapter who are a little under the weather we send our best wishes and think especially of our Treasurer, Helen Pacey, who is recovering from ankle surgery.



A smile for all grandfathers:

When my grandson asked me how old I was, I teasingly replied: "I'm not sure". "Look in your underwear, Grandpa", he advised: "Mine says I'm 4 to 6."

Your invitation to our next meeting

20th February 2012

10 am for 10.30 am start.

Tea and coffee on arrival
at the

Senior Citizens Hall
Brunker Rd. Adamstown

Our Guest Speaker is our member

John Risby

Who will tell us the history of his
First Fleet ancestor

Edward Risby

who sailed on the 'Alexander'.

It would be appreciated if you could
bring along a small plate of finger
food to share over lunch.

Fee \$5 pp

For your Diary:



Thursday: 26th January:

**Australia Day celebrations Newcastle
Foreshore.**

Hope to see you there!

Monday 20th February: Meeting

**Speaker: John Risby
(Details above)**

Monday 20th March: Outing:

**Mission to Seafarers
96 Hannell Street, Wickham
Diagonally opposite the Fish Co-Op
Coffee on arrival at 10.30am**

Gary Dodd, the Mission Chaplain, knows a lot about Newcastle Harbour. He will also tell us of the current services the Mission provides to seamen who are visiting our Port aboard ships from all around the world.

Lunch to follow at the nearby Salvation Army Café, **The Olive Branch.**

With our March outing in mind here are some old Seafaring sayings that have been absorbed into our language.

To Pass with flying Colours

On sailing ships the flags were called "colours". In the days when the English, Spanish and French fleets were at war and a battle had been fought, the victors would sail home with all their flags flying from the masthead to show the people on shore that they had won.

Touch and Go

When sailing in unfamiliar waters where there may be sandbars or reefs, the ship would sometimes touch the bottom but not stop, but "go on" - so it's **touch and go** when you aren't sure how things will turn out.

Cut and Run

When sailing ships were at anchor and the lookout on duty spotted pirates or other enemies, the anchor rope would be **cut** and the ship would **run** for safety.

Spick and span

Spick and span was the term used to describe a new ship. The word *spick* is a variation of 'spike' and *span* means 'timber shavings'. When a new ship was launched the heads of the spikes were still bright and there were wood shavings still on the deck so the ship was described as "spick and span".

I can't "fathom" this out

Today we use this expression if we don't understand something. Fathom is of course a unit of measurement (6 feet) used by sailors. It dates back to the early English word 'fadem' which means 'embrace'.

You can only embrace someone if you use both arms e.g. giving someone a big hug. You also brace yourself to prevent an accident by using your arms as braces. So if you don't understand something, you are really saying "**I can't embrace the idea**".

But why is *fadem* meaning *embrace* used as a measurement of sailing ships?

The length of a man's outstretched arms is roughly 6 feet. A quick measurement to check the depth of water under the keel of the ship was to drop a line over the side until it touched bottom. As it was pulled up they measured the line with outstretched arms and the depth was measured in fathoms.

I think I understand!

Your Editor, Judy Aubin